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THEY FOUND THE CHURCH THERE



*Our hope for a new world must be based on faith in God,
and pursued in accordance with His character and law.*

Archbishop of Canterbury

FOREIGN MISSIONS CONFERENCE OF NORTH AMERICA

156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

They Found the Church There

*M*ILITARY and naval activities of the United States are taking out of our homeland hundreds of thousands of American youth. These youths have been trucked or marched, flown or sailed, up and down the world and over the seven seas. As a result, the members of almost every home in every town and hamlet are studying maps. Through letters and the printed page they are learning of lands, islands, and peoples of which before Pearl Harbor many of them had never heard. Through the risks faced by their own flesh and blood American home folks now see that they share a narrowing world with all sorts and conditions of men, women and children from every tribe and nation. What kind of world is it to be? This great question even now comes close to us all; it is going to come closer.

An inclusive, workable set-up for this narrowing world, a set-up based on sanity, friendliness, law, and sound human relationships, is called World Order. World War II has shown us as never before the need for such world order. The achievement of such an order is the greatest single task that confronts our race—a task vast beyond our comprehension and unthinkably baffling in its complexities and difficulties. But it must be attempted. It is that or World War III. And World War III probably would bring about the destruction of most of the remaining values built up through all the centuries since the cave man worked on his stone artifacts.

Religion the Basis

Discerning minds see that any workable scheme for world living must ultimately be based on morals and religion. Science, that is, the “know what and how” of human life in relation to its inclusive environment, and economics, that is, humanity’s maintenance through using the resources of the environment, are inescapably important, and must never be discounted. Nevertheless, the humanness of human relationships, the meanings and values and end of this earthly pilgrimage, and the great questions as to what is back of, above, and beyond human existence—no world order can stand up to the

demands to be made upon it unless these things also are adequately brought under consideration. Associate Chief Justice Frankfurter says:

“If only we can bring sufficient goodwill and resolute purpose to bear, the day need not be far off when the economic problem will take a back seat where it belongs and the arena of the heart and head will be occupied by our real problems—the problems of life and of human relations, of creation and behavior and religion.”

Matrix of a World Society

For those who bear the name of Christian the verities and values associated with that name lead to the concept of a world society whose moral standards are set by the teachings of Jesus, and whose religious ideals transcend all national boundaries and all racial groups, and offer every abiding value, all because life in its totality is to be God-centered. The Christian missionary enterprise, from the first to the twentieth century, has sought to bring into being such a society and to extend its scope and range into new areas and among unreached groups until it becomes truly world-wide. So far as accomplished, this has been done in part through direct propagandist methods and in part through slower leavening processes, such as educational and humane ministries.

Organized into local congregations and fellowship groups, all inter-related and coordinated as a living, functioning fabric, such a society would constitute a world Christian Church. That world Church is in being as idea, ideal, and holy purpose; it has not progressed far as a visible Church. However, different Christian church bodies, certain of them interracial and international in character, are in being, and through their respective foreign mission agencies and efforts, these to a considerable degree interpenetrative, they have reached out over the world until the centers, large and small, of worship and of effort are numbered by the thousand. Before this war started there were in Asia 46,000 organized Protestant churches and other places having regular Christian services. In Africa there were 56,000 such places. In Latin America 12,000, and in the Pacific Islands, 7,800.

They Found Christian Brothers

The Protestant churches of so-called home-base lands have long been sending missionaries to far places and among alien peoples, and the converts gathered now number millions. Many of these converts have developed characters and personality values worthy of the finest Christian traditions. Lads

from American factories, farms and churches have been meeting these Christians and have been challenged, inspired and comforted—even rescued by them—Christians of other lands who set high store by the Bible available to them through hundreds of translations. They have accepted and are honestly trying to live by its precepts, and in very truth already belong to that world Church for which we yearn and which all too slowly is coming into being.

So it has come about that the churches of the West far outran our servicemen to the ends of the earth. When the men in uniform come back and join us in thinking on world order they are sure to tell us that the beginnings of world order are already laid in the fabric of Christian churches, institutions and fellowships already existent. Of course they have shared the surprise of Mr. Wendell Willkie (see *One World*) when they found that the Christian churches were *there* ahead of them, *there* being any one of these 122,000 places in Asia, Africa, Latin America, or the Pacific Islands, where worshipping Protestant Christian groups are to be found. Counting mission work only of the Roman Catholic Church, and not the whole of their activities, that church has in addition 55,000 church *buildings* for these same areas. If all Roman Catholic churches in the Philippines and Latin America were added the Roman Catholic figures would be very greatly increased. Our far-ranging soldiers, sailors, marines and air men can't have missed all of these reminders of world Christianity—these are too many and too widely distributed for that.

Leaven in Two Billions

The “mess we are in,” involving havoc and desolation around the world, has many causes. Any simple diagnosis would be both naive and grievously misleading. But just in so far as the Christian heritage and the Christian forces of today have major contributions to make to an unfolding future (and on that issue what follower of Jesus has a disturbing doubt?) the tragedy of this decade would seem in no small degree to root in the failure of the Christian movement in the world to do its work far enough, fast enough, soundly enough, pervasively enough, to transform living in the direction of a universally good life.

Nevertheless, world travelers and our overseas men in uniform probably lack real comprehension of the vast scope of the work, the great resourcefulness, the faithfulness and the untold heroism of the soldiers of the Cross who have sought to spread the Christian values, and have done so by hiding the leaven—not in three measures of meal but among two billions of human-kind.

The Leaven Has Worked

That leaven has been working. It has not worked fast enough or effectively enough to save even Macedonia, whence in other days Paul heard his call; it hasn't saved Germany nor the rest of Europe. It hasn't saved Japan, and Japan's victims. It hasn't made a heaven out of Great Britain or the United States or Russia. But it has steadied Niemöller in his cell. It has held Kagawa firmly to his high efforts—so far as anyone in the West has heard. It has led Chiang Kai-shek and his illustrious wife to set highest among the purposes for their people the eager hope that the Chinese should not hate the Japanese. It has stirred the fuzzy-wuzzies of New Guinea until the wounded Australian soldiers saved by these "angels of the Owen Stanley Track" were made to "think that Christ was black."

And so at a multitude of places up and down the earth American service forces are finding creative ministries in action, ministries which stem from Bethlehem, from Galilee, from Olivet, from Calvary, ministries expressed in many ways and through a multitude of devoted souls won out of every nation where the forces of Christianity have been released, and serving within or across the boundaries of race and tribe and clan.

How About World Order?

But how about world order—as yet unachieved, but on the agenda for every purposeful and thinking man or woman everywhere today? If world order is to have trustworthy moral and spiritual bases, where are these to come from? By what process are they to be discovered, approved, accepted, by humanity? Here is where the churches come in with their long experience, their multifarious functions and activities. Are the churches equal to their tasks under the present and probable postwar conditions? Probably not, but who knows? Profound heart-searching, critical efforts at the discovery of the meaning of our times, great commitments for the new day, the renewed application of tested methods, the summons of consecrated inventiveness to the devising of new methods, and above all a wide and determined purpose to work cooperatively—all these will be called for in the days just ahead.

Missions Will Go On

And where do missions come in? What have they to do? Certainly the enterprise is not "done for" if missions are to be regarded as the ex-

panding edge of the Christian churches, the ministering agencies of Christendom reaching out to humanity in physical and spiritual need. The missionary methods of the years that have gone may be supplanted by other techniques of helpfulness; servants of humanity having larger possibilities of creative helpfulness, though still driven by the ideals and spirit of Jesus, may have to be discovered and enlisted. Even some new name for the movement may better challenge giving constituencies and the enlistment of youth. But missions in some form, under some name, beyond a doubt will go on, because suffering, sinful humanity needs the values and the helpfulness of devoted spirits who for the greatest of ends go forth to places far and near to serve the deepest of needs.

Our Resources

The resources for facing the new day are by no means inconsequential. Rich experience is available. Great world missionary conferences—Edinburgh, 1910; Jerusalem, 1928; Madras, 1938—have brought leaders together from many countries, have focussed this experience, and have shown that leadership both national and international is steadily developing in the lands of the younger churches. To guide further effort through Protestant missions there are the National Christian Councils and the International Missionary Council, and for North America in particular the long established Foreign Missions Conference which came into being in 1893.

World scholarship, with especial reference to church history, geography, social anthropology and other relevant areas of study including missions, is in the service of the period before us. Much pointed and valuable research in missions has been done in recent years. There is a realization spreading among Christian constituencies that the missionary task is exceedingly pertinent to the needs of our days and that essentially the Christian task and summons throughout the world are one. Religious isolationism is tending to fade and the thrust to realize fellowship is gathering power. In confronting problems realism develops as the sense of world tragedy becomes more poignant. Something tremendous, however dimly envisaged as yet, is ahead.

Emergency Tasks

Destruction and desolation spread over the world. The world revolution through which we are passing is likely to make changes in the fabric of life as we have known it far beyond our present comprehension. Mission projects

and programs will not escape such changes. The best we can do is to seek to understand our times and to project our thinking as far into the future as practicable.

With the cessation of armed struggle, and in certain areas even earlier, the widespread, profound and devastating physical need will call for Christian philanthropy as well as for international governmental and public aid. North American foreign mission boards, long disciplined and equipped for activities abroad, are now participating in the Church Committee on Overseas Relief and Reconstruction. Assuredly the challenge of this emergency task will not soon disappear.

The "orphaned" missions, those supported earlier from the Axis or occupied countries and because of the war left isolated, will surely continue to need aid for a considerable period after armed struggle ceases in their own home-base lands.

Creative Reconstruction

As the war comes to a close, "another job for the churches will be the teaching of control of the unleashed energy of hate and the redirection of that energy into the avenues of creative reconstruction." But "teaching of control" will not suffice. The great healing of the spirit for western Christians will come—can come—only through release of energies in new directions through international and interracial ministries which heal both bodies and spirits of those for whom these ministries are then maintained. What agencies of the home churches comparable to the foreign boards have the experience, techniques, outlook, relationships, and ideals by which to lead to these great ends?

What of the Future?

Inescapably certain great questions are presenting themselves, such as the following:

(1) What is the essential relationship of relief and rehabilitation to the longtime objective of foreign missions? Can and should relief measures supported through mission funds be made directly contributory to the development of church life and work or should relief be done solely or primarily for immediate results in salvaging life?

(2) In those countries to which missionaries have gone and in which mission endeavor has been profoundly disturbed or upset because of the

desolation of war, what should be the great objectives of mission effort in the years after the missionaries can begin their work anew? To set going once more whatever is discoverable of the work as it was, and thereafter to build to the reclamation of these projects by methods long followed and still believed to be sound and effective? Or to regard the new period, however tragic it may appear from a backward look, as a providential opportunity for building afresh on new and possibly better lines? If the second direction were chosen, what attitudes, ideals, and methods should thereafter be regarded as the soundest, the most creative, the most truly Christian, in the fields of self-support, church unity, religious education, personal conduct, family life, social service, evangelism? How are these highest and best things to be discovered, if they are not already in sight?

(3) Shall returned missionaries now "in waiting" in the homeland be returned to their original fields or utilized wherever they can be advantageously set to work under emerging conditions? Shall those transferred to other lands for the duration be reclaimed or permanently allotted to the tasks that hitherto they have regarded as temporary?

(4) What kinds of new missionaries should be recruited and through what kinds of training should they be put? Just what is to be the place and work of western personnel in the days immediately ahead? Certain of these personnel matters are already being dealt with in so far as field conditions appear to justify action or home initiative and procedure appear practicable. For the future, missionary methods and direction are likely to be markedly different from those of the past. In many cases speed will be greatly enhanced. More missionaries will fly; fewer will paddle canoes.

The Message of the Gospel

In the days ahead, to the extent that missions testify through humane ministries to the spirit of the gospel they will be widely welcomed, for needy humanity will be with us for many a sad day. The possible reach of the helping hand is being extended far through the magic speed and spread of modern communications. Different Christian groups will find varying methods congenial, while the purpose to be faithful to the meaning and the message of the gospel will, as hitherto, lead to variant ways of proclaiming truth as understood and accepted. Every honest search for the Kingdom of God will be making both for a World Church and for World Order. Without such seeking neither can come to realization.

Convictions of Men with Vision

ON my recent trip I saw at first hand a multitude of concrete instances which convinced me of the value of foreign missions both to the lands they serve and to the cause of goodwill for America. Everywhere I went I found American colleges, schools, hospitals and churches, many of them supported by the churches of this land. I found American missionaries, men and women, exerting a leadership—a human and personal leadership—which I have no hesitation in characterizing as vital to the future hopes, not alone of other nations, but of our own United States.

Furthermore, the missionaries have everywhere stimulated a desire for education—not mere dusty scholarship, but reading and writing, the arts and sciences, living knowledge that binds men together. When Hitler wanted to prepare his people for war he burned the books. We who want to prepare for peace must open them—open them all over the earth.

The missionaries themselves are leaders—but that is not all the point. They teach the people to provide their own leadership. They develop within their missions a sense of well-being, of self-reliance, of self-respect; others in near-by communities are awakened to these new forces; the movement, constantly nourished by western ideals, spreads outward to revitalize an entire nation. That is the practical and living process that has been going on now for decades. And that, I believe, is one of the chief causes for the goodwill toward the United States that now exists in almost every corner of the earth.

—WENDELL L. WILLKIE, in an address
at the World Christianity meeting of the
Presbyterian General Assembly, Detroit,
May 31, 1943

IF we are to have a world Christian fellowship that is to be really effective in building a world order the Christian group in many a country will need to be strengthened. Where the group which holds a Christian world view is in too small a minority, even though that group may be solidly organized and may possess great vitality, it is in constant danger of being overwhelmed by its environment. Young men and women must continue to live their lives in the name of Christ in other lands than their own in an effort to enlarge and strengthen the Christian group which has already been established there. There is danger that we leave the work of helping to create the world Christian fellowship—a work that has been so well begun—in the middle of the job. We have brought the load up the hill just so far. It is the push up the last few rods to the top that is the most difficult; but, if we do not stick with it until the top is reached, the load will be likely to slip back to the bottom, and we shall have to do the whole job over again. There are signs of weariness in the Church today, but if we can see the deeper significance of what is being done, we may gain new strength for the last hard pull to the top. May we not say that on the completion of this task hangs the fate of modern civilization?

—LUMAN J. SHAFER, in
The Christian Alternative to World Chaos,
Round Table Press (1940)

*A*NYWHERE on our earth's surface today—go out to the last outpost of civilization, to the last doctor who is engaged in the private practice of medicine, to the last government school, to the last regular station of the great scientific and research foundations, to the last institution of general philanthropy. Then, from that frontier, go on—on out into the wilderness or the jungle. Ultimately you may come upon a little grass-grown clearing, usually with its three buildings—a hospital, a school, a church; always in its fourfold ministry to human life—to health of body through medicine, to emancipation of mind through education, to general social and community advance, and to redemption of spirit through faith. The Christian Movement is the only world-wide agency for the amelioration of basic human need and the furnishing of the essentials for true living to all mankind.

—HENRY P. VAN DUSEN, in
For the Healing of the Nations,
Chas. Scribner's Sons (1940)

*I*NEVITABLY and very fittingly will the supranational Christian church be called upon to take a decisive part in world construction. Missionaries and national Christians through the years of recent struggle have manifested bravery, imagination, and complete self-sacrifice in alleviating distress and sorrow, in calming the turbulent, and in proclaiming and demonstrating the validity of religious ideals. Through technical proficiency, social and linguistic knowledge, and serenity of spirit they are supremely prepared to stand as the architects and builders of the future. Agencies other than the church will share in the utilization of their services; governments, international organizations, and foundations will seek them; they will stand as the prophets of democracy when destruction gives way to rebuilding.

—THE CHURCH AND WORLD ORDER:

Reports of the Seminars to the Conference
on Christian Bases of World Order, Delaware, Ohio, March, 1943

*T*HE missionary sees humanity as one lump—as just one great mankind in which all men are as one, equal, brothers. What a chance he has to beat down the old Eastern hatred of Western exploitation that simply must be beaten down before East and West can live in peace together! With his mission schools, he has been the most outstanding foe of Oriental illiteracy for a century and a half; with his teachers of engineering he has been preaching the gospel of good roads; with his agricultural experts in the village he has been practicing the gospel of getting more, more, more out of the good earth. With his doctors and surgeons and nurses in his missionary hospitals he has been fighting human pain in the name of the Great Physician, regardless of race, creed or color. What a chance the missionary has now. He can bring us peace!

—VICE PRESIDENT HENRY A. WALLACE,
in the *Christian Herald*, January, 1943

OUR soldiers say that mission boys are the best. When I visit the troops it is about the Mission that they want me to tell them; for they have seen qualities in these native boys even when they are far away from the immediate influence of the Mission which they admire—qualities which they know are not the qualities of head hunters and cannibals, but which, though our Australian soldiers may not so express it, they feel come from one source only—the heart of Christ.

—THE BISHOP OF NEW GUINEA, in
Australian Board of Missions Review (May, 1943)

IT is because the foreign missionary at his best so genuinely takes up his cross—identifying himself with the needs and sufferings of a people who have no immediate claim upon him, and for their sake sacrificing friends, comforts, possessions, and if need be life itself—that he has acquired such a powerful hold on the imagination of mankind.

With all the courage of a soldier, he performs a redemptive work that no soldier can imitate, because military force at best holds evil in check when it gets dangerously powerful, while devoted missionary service sometimes actually breaks the grip of evil upon men's souls, and extinguishes its power by bearing it sacrificially.

If then the world situation requires us to abandon the distinction between "home" and "foreign," by making us members of one "non-Christian world" (physically one neighborhood, morally one den of thieves!) it certainly does not require us to abandon foreign missions. A queer time to do that! If ever there was a lost world, a heathen world, it is ours, whether we sample its heathenism in Chicago or Shanghai. What is really required is that every Christian should become *a foreign missionary at home in all the world*, giving himself to the redress of injustice, the reconciliation of the alienated, the comfort of the sin-sick and sorrowing wherever he may be; and that the Church should so survey her task and distribute her energies as to bring God's help to every accessible spot on earth, especially to all points of unusual tension and distress.

This is our missionary task. Divine justice requires it. Divine mercy inspires it. The divine Sufferer on the Cross sends us forth to it.

—WALTER HORTON, Fairfield Professor of Theology,
Oberlin Graduate School of Theology (1943)

TODAY there is spread over the world a fellowship of men and women which has no other bond of unity whatever except that of being named "Christians." There is nothing else at all like it in the world. When all has been said that can be said about the divisions of the Church, its institutional sloth, its regard for money, we are left with the fact that this society is spreading faster in the world today than ever before; that it has in the last hundred years faced harder tasks in its extension, gone to more stubborn groups and faced tougher difficulties than at most times in its long history; and that it has showed itself able to retain some of the character of a universal society even in the face of war. Looked at with the eye of earthly sight, it is a vast series of

minority groups, some large and some small, within the several great masses into which human society is divided. Looked at with the eye of faith, it is the earnest of God's will for a redeemed humanity.

—WILLIAM PATON, in
The Church and the New Order (1941)

NEVER in history has such a volume of hate been generated as will be released on armistice day. Hostages have been massacred by the scores of thousands, whole peoples torn from their homes and transported like cattle to distant lands, entire communities systematically looted and degraded, districts and nations methodically starved. But the only thing conceivably worse for Europe than this wholesale cruelty would be the retribution which, in terms of human justice, it deserves.

Unrestrained, those who have suffered these cruelties and indignities would take such vengeance and so perpetuate their hatreds as to delay orderly reconstruction for years. Obviously this must not be permitted to happen. But to prevent such a humanly justifiable revenge will call for political management and wisdom of the highest order.

For you cannot abolish such hate. Armies cannot do it—they themselves share it. Laws cannot do it—they will be made by the haters themselves. Hate of such intensity must release itself somehow in violent action, else it becomes a creeping disease erupting in unpredictable forms.

Yet it is a fluid thing and will finally be content to satisfy itself on any one of many objects. It will be the task of statesmanship to discover the objects through which Europe may release this poison from its body. Let us hope that it can somehow be turned against brute nature, so that in the frenzy of reconstruction—of rebuilding homes, restoring farms, cracking open mountains in search of hidden wealth—Europe may at last purge its tortured soul. Yet it seems to me that this will be the peculiar mission of the churches. Surely never before has it been more necessary for the salvation of man here below that divine authority should proclaim: Vengeance is *mine*; I will repay, saith the Lord.

—HIRAM MOTHERWELL, in
The Peace We Fight For, Harper & Bros. (1943)

NEITHER the missionaries nor those who sent them out were aiming at the creation of a world-wide fellowship, interpenetrating the nations, bridging the gulfs between them, and supplying the promise of a check to their rivalries. The aim for nearly the whole period was to *preach the Gospel to as many individuals as could be reached* so that those who were won to discipleship should be put in the way of eternal salvation. Almost incidentally, the great world-fellowship has arisen from that enterprise. But it has arisen. It is the great new fact of our time. It is of urgent importance that we become aware of it, that we further it in every way open to us, and that through it we take our part in providing for the Spirit of Christ the agency by which He may transform the world.

—WILLIAM TEMPLE, Archbishop of Canterbury,
in his enthronement sermon (June, 1942)

